

REMARKS

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 15-16 and 18-24 contain allowable subject matter.

Amendments to the Drawings to conform with the specification and to identify Figure 17 as “prior art” are attached.

Claims 14-27 are all the claims pending in the application.

Reconsideration and removal of the rejection of claims 14, 17 and 25-27 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Matsuzaki (JP 3-92758) are respectfully requested on the basis of the present amendment to the claims and the following remarks.

Matsuzaki is directed to a method for inspecting defective products in the production assembly line. As illustrated in Fig. 1, a product 2 is conveyed via a conveyer 1 to a striking device 5 for inspection, where the product 2 is struck by a striking tool 7 so that a striking sound is generated. The sound pressure of the striking sound is collected and transduced by a microphone 18a into a voltage, which, in turn, is input into a noise level meter 18 to be displayed. The analog signal is then converted, through a filter 19, an AC/DC/LOG converter 20 and an A/D converter 21, into the digital signal. The digital signal is input into a computer 22, which determines whether or not there are any internal defects in the products based on the waveform of the sound pressure level (dB).

By comparison, in the claimed structure inspection apparatus, a vibration detector is placed in contact with a surface of the measuring object. With this structure, it is possible to

objectively evaluate the internal defects of a structure irrespective of surrounding noise or the shape of a hammer. For example, at page 4, lines 2-8, the present specification discloses:

...which are capable of objectively evaluate the internal condition of a concrete structure irrespective of surrounding noise or the shape of a hammer, by placing a vibration detecting sensor in direct contact with a measuring surface so as to directly convert a vibration generated on the measuring surface into a corresponding voltage without the intervention of a medium such as air thereby to quantify the vibration generated on the measuring surface concerned....
(emphasis added)

On the contrary, the microphone 18a as taught by Matsuzaki is spaced from the product 2, rather than placed in direct contact with the product, to detect the sound pressure level. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that since Matsuzaki does not disclose each and every feature of the claimed invention, as set forth in claim 14, claim 14 is not anticipated, nor suggested by, Matsuzaki.

Claim 14 patentably distinguishes over the Matsuzaki reference for the reasons above. Dependent claims 25-27, due to dependency, also patentably distinguish over Matsuzaki for at least the reasons that their base claim 14 patentably distinguishes over the cited art.

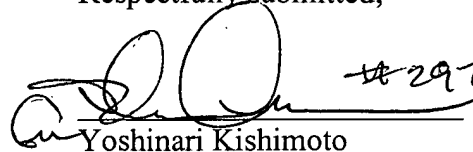
In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

RESPONSE UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
Appln. No.: 10/070,379

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The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

 #29710
Yoshinari Kishimoto
Registration No. 47,327

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

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